

Message Text

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PAGE 01 FUKUOK 00125 140411Z
ACTION SCS-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-12 CA-01 FSE-00 /020 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0922
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

UNCLAS FUKUOKA 0125

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC (JERNSTROM, KARL W.)
SUBJECT: JERNSTROM DEATH CASE

REF: (A) TOKYO 12385 (B) FUKUOKA 0112 (C) FUKUOKA 0114

1. ACCORDING TO POST'S INFORMATION, EVEN BEFORE DEPARTMENT HAD INFORMED MR. JERNSTROM'S SON GILBERT OF HIS FATHER'S DEATH AND PASSED INFORMATION CONTAINED REF (A), WORD HAD REACHED HIM VIA MR. HARRIS WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN ESCORT AND HAD BEEN SERVING AS INTERPRETER FOR MR. JERNSTROM IN HOSPITAL (REFS (B), (C));.

2. APPROXIMATELY 2:50 PM LOCAL TIME JULY 8 GILBERT JERNSTROM PERSONALLY TELEPHONED PRINCIPAL OFFICER AND GAVE INSTRUCTIONS THAT HIS FATHER'S REMAINS WERE TO BE SHIPPED HOME AFTER EMBALMING AND THAT HE WOULD BE BORROWING MONEY AGAINST FATHER'S LIFE INSURANCE FOR THAT PURPOSE. P.O. EXPLAINED IN DETAIL COST DIFFERENCES THAT FAMILY WOULD INCUR WITH SHIPMENT OF EMBALMED REMAINS RATHER THAN CREMATION AND SHIPMENT OF ASHES AND FACT THAT 900 KM OVERLAND SHIPMENT OF REMAINS FROM YAMAGUCHI PREFECTURE TO YOKOTA AFB WOULD ADD AS MUCH AS ANOTHER 50 PERCENT TO COST OF INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTATION. SON STATED HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD PROBLEM OF COST DIFFERENTIAL, BUT WISH OF FAMILY WAS STILL TO SHIP REMAINS UNCREMATED. ACCORDINGLY, CONSULAR OFFICER INFORMED JAPANESE COMPANY IN YAMAGUCHI OF FAMILY'S PREFERENCE AND PASSED ON ORDER TO SHIP REMAINS TO YOKOTA AFB. OWING TO LACK OF ANY REFRIGERATED MORGUE FACILITIES IN YAMAGUCHI PREFECTURE AND

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CONSEQUENT URGENCY, COMPANY ENGAGED JAPANESE FUNERAL COMPANY TO PROVIDE HEARSE FOR IMMEDIATE OVERLAND TRANSPORTATION TO YOKOTA. REMAINS DEPARTED YAMAGUCHI VIA THIS MEANS APPROXIMATELY 6:00 PM JULY 8.

3. FOLLOWING DAY (SUNDAY), AT APPROXIMATELY 11:45 AM MR. CHAMBERLAIN FROM GLOBE FUNERAL PARLOR, SPARTA, NEW JERSEY CALLED TO ANNOUNCE THAT

HE HAD PERSUADED FAMILY TO CHANGE MIND. REMAINS WERE THEREFORE TO BE CREMATED AND ASHES SHIPPED. CONSULAR OFFICER EXPLAINED, AND MR. CHAMBERLAIN UNDERSTOOD THAT REMAINS WERE ALREADY MORE THAN HALFWAY TO YOKOTA BY TIME OF HIS CALL SO THAT THIS ADDITIONAL EXPENSE HAD BECOME UNAVOIDABLE.

4. TOTAL COSTS STILL NOT YET FIRM, BUT BEST ESTIMATES ARE (IN YEN AT ROUGHLY 200 AT \$1): 230,000 FOR HEARSE TRANSPORT, 20,000 COFFIN, 30,000 FOR CLOTHES AND ACCESSORIES, AND 860,000 ALL HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL BILLS. THIS COMES TO ESTIMATED TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY 1,140,000 YEN OR \$5,700 COST PRIOR TO ARRIVAL OF REMAINS AT YOKOTA. FROM YOKOTA SHIPMENT OF CREMATED REMAINS WILL BE ADDITIONAL APPROXIMATE \$500.

5. TELEPHONE CALL TO POST FROM SON JULY 11 CONVEYED INFORMATION THAT HE WOULD BE SENDING FOREIGN DRAFT IN SUM SUFFICIENT TO COVER SHIPMENT OF ASHES FROM YOKOTA TO BANK OF AMERICA IN TOKYO PAYABLE TO EMBASSY TOKYO. REMAINDER OF CHARGES WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT PAYMENT FROM ESTATE OF HIS FATHER.

6. FYI EMBASSY AND DEPARTMENT ONLY: MR. JERNSTROM ORIGINALLY CAME TO JAPAN TO SETTLE DISPUTE CONCERNING ONE OF HIS PATENTS, ALLEGEDLY BEING IMPROPERLY HANDLED BY JAPANESE COMPANY (REF (B)) SINCE HE WAS APPARENTLY ALREADY SICK MAN, HE PRESUMABLY WOULD NOT HAVE COME, UNCLASSIFIED

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UNLESS HE PERCEIVED STRONG REASONS. BEFORE HIS DEATH HE WAS TOO WEAK TO EXPLAIN CIRCUMSTANCES TO CONSULAR OFFICER, BUT IT IS HARD FOR POST NOT TO CONCLUDE THAT JAPANESE COMPANY BEARS AT LEAST SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS DEMISE. SINCE WE HAVE NO DETAILS, WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN, BUT THERE IS ALSO POSSIBILITY THAT THIS CASE COULD RESULT IN CIVIL LITIGATION AGAINST JAPANESE COMPANY BY JERNSTROM NOK. DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR BILLS INCLURRED BY LATE MR. JERNSTROM BEFORE ARRIVAL AT YOKOTA AFB INCLUDING HOSPITALIZATION AND TRANSPORTATION CHARGES WILL PRESUMABLY THUS HAVE TO WAIT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN LEGAL COUNSEL FOR JERNSTROM ESTATE AND NOK AND COUNSEL FOR JAPANESE COMPANY. END FYI PABST

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